

# Network Administrator

Keep the network, the servers and the Wi-Fi running so everyone else can work. Two years of college and a certification or two get you in.

## TYPICAL PAY

**\$99,130**

a year, full time

## PAY RANGE

**\$63k to \$155k**

starting to experienced

## TIME TO QUALIFY

**2 to 4 years**

after high school

## DEMAND

**Limited**

job outlook

## LICENCE NEEDED

**No**

anyone can do it

## WHERE YOU WORK

**Offices, data centers, hospitals, school districts, firms that run oth...**

## How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12  
 Take any computing class you can get. Build a home network, break it, fix it. That story gets you interviews.
- 2 Two-year degree or certificate** 1 to 2 years  
 A community college program in networking or information technology. A four-year degree works too and opens more doors later.
- 3 First certification** 2 to 4 months of study  
 Network+ from CompTIA, or the CCNA (Cisco Certified Network Associate). Either one tells an employer you know what a subnet is.
- 4 Help desk or junior technician** 1 to 2 years  
 Almost nobody starts on the network itself. You fix laptops and reset passwords first, and you learn how the place actually works.
- 5 Network administrator** Ongoing  
 Switches, firewalls, servers, backups, monitoring. You own the thing everyone complains about when it is slow.

## Pros and cons

- + Six figures is normal without a four-year degree
- + Cheap to train for, and a Pell Grant can cover most of it
- + Every industry needs you, so you can change cities or fields
- Nobody notices the network until it breaks, and then it is your fault
- Nights, weekends and on-call rotations are part of the job
- Certifications expire, so the studying never stops

## Optional boosts

CCNA (Cisco Certified Network Associate). Cloud certifications. Security+ or the CISSP (Certified Information Systems Security Professional). CCNP (Cisco Certified Network Professional).

## Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Network and Computer Systems Administrators (15-1244.00)  
 O\*NET OnLine: Network and Computer Systems Administrators  
 CompTIA Network+ certification  
 Cisco training and certifications

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/network-administrator>

## Good to know

### The job is shrinking and still hiring

Federal projections have employment in this occupation flat or falling slightly through 2034, and yet about 14,300 openings a year are expected. Almost all of them come from people retiring or moving up...

### It has a dozen names

The same work is advertised as network administrator, network analyst, network engineer, systems engineer, network coordinator and LAN (local area network) administrator. Search all of them or you will...



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